1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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824 [322] 285 [531] their houses. Dishes, benches, cooking-boxes, cradles, totem-poles, canoes, all were carved from this wood. The bark was woven into baskets, and when dyed formed the most common ceremonial decoration.

132 Even within the forty miles of the river valley formerly occupied by the Bella Coola there are considerable variations in climate. At the mouth of the river the typical Pacific coast type is found, without great extremes of temperature and with much rain, especially in winter time. During winter, the moisture is precipitated as snow a few hundred feet above the valley, and the limit of the snow can be watched on the mountain slopes, rising or falling a few feet from day to day. Farther up the valley, the winters are colder and in many cases snow lies for weeks on the ground, and in the upper part of the Bella Coola area the winters are severe, although much more moderate than on the upper regions immediately to the east.

173 [176] What has been the history of the inhabitants of this land? They believe that long, long ago, *Alquntăm*, the supreme god, caused their first ancestors to be created in his house, *Nusmăt·a*, in the land above, and sent them down to populate the Bella Coola valley. These first people came in groups of two or three, brothers and sisters, or occasionally man and wife, each group descending, in many cases in animal form, to a certain mountain and then making their home at its foot. They brought with them animals and fish, tools and houses, also the knowledge of ceremonial dances. In fact, they differed from the Bella Coola of the recent past only in having greater supernatural power. These first people increased with extraordinary rapidity, until each group grew into a village, bound together by a knowledge of their first ancestor. In 173 course of time the occupants of certain villages combined, as 361 some increased more rapidly than others, but on the whole each settlement maintained its character of being the descendants of one group of the first settlers of this world.

[175] This mythological belief is a fair picture of Bella Coola life as it was when the first white man visited the valley. Mac-

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kenzie, making his memorable overland trip to the Pacific, records coming upon Indian villages at every few miles of his course. Boas describes the way in which the inhabitants of each of these claim to be descended from one group of ancestors.

Though it is impossible to estimate the former population of the Bella Coola valley with any degree of accuracy, it must have been in the thousands. In 1922 there were surviving rather more than three hundred individuals, who live in one village on an Indian reserve near the north bank of the Bella Coola River, about a quarter of a mile from the sea. In the last century the tribe was stricken with smallpox, and since then consumption, venereal disease, measles, and other diseases of the white man have taken their deadly toll. Changed conditions of life and decay of the rich ceremonial around which centred their interests in the old days are also contributory factors in their decline. Within the last few years, however, the population has begun to increase.

Bella Coola Villages

The following list of Bella Coola villages was obtained. In an effort to learn which had been deserted in recent years, the writer always asked whether or not a town was occupied at the time of Mackenzie's visit, an event of such great interest to the grandparents of the older people that the memory of it is still preserved. Villages said to have been occupied at that time are marked with an asterisk.

Three rivers empty into the head of South Bentinck Arm, which is about one mile in width (see Plate 7). The Bella Coola, flowing from the east, enters at the southern edge, and the *Nalpaxtkwaa-c* winds in from the north to the opposite angle of the head of the fiord. This stream, "The Nearest River" of the Bella Coola, so-called because of its proximity to the sea, is shown on maps as the Necleetsconnay. Between the mouths of these two is the *Pe-xsb*, a small stream rising

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361 able for axes, which occurs in the valley of a small stream on
[316] the slope of the mountain.

*(23) *Nalleax*, "The Place Where There Are No Falls": an affluent from the north enters the main Bella Coola about thirty-one miles from the sea and the town was located on this creek about two hundred yards above its junction with the Bella Coola. The ruins of this moderately large town were still
[175] standing about 1870. Mackenzie reached the Bella Coola River
[166] at this place. At the time of his arrival the population was
[226] larger than usual, because the salmon-weir had withstood some heavy freshets which had destroyed several weirs on the Bella Coola, and driven the inhabitants of other villages to *Nalleax*.

[133] It is said that the affluent at *Nalleax*, the stream *Xaigx*, is the only one in the whole Bella Coola valley that does not drop precipitously into a ravine leading to the main river. Its source is a spring at the end of a pocket-like valley, at the base of steep cliffs, but it does not fall down these. The town is named from this circumstance. The area around the spring is called *Nuxnāxnaqkt*, and it is said that some families living on the Skeena sing of it as the spot where their first ancestors came to earth, although their descendants do not know where it is located.

*(24) *Stuaz* on the point between the *La'ayix* (Atnarko) and *Sla-kl* (Whitewater) rivers which join to form the Bella Coola. This, the most populous of the upper river towns, was deserted not long ago. The meaning of the name is unknown.

(25) *Qwāsaf*, "The Place of Herbage": on the north side of the Atnarko River, a few hundred yards above the forks. This small town was deserted many years ago. The name was
[137] given on account of the hill behind the village being covered with a rank growth of plants and small bushes, but no trees.

[133] (26) *Swaalk-tl*, "The Place of Falls," so called from the strong rapids of the Atnarko at this point: on the north side
[173] of the river about ten miles from the forks. This large town was long ago deserted when a large rock in the midst of the

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Indians from both of these areas were interviewed and it was found that, except for minor details in certain beliefs, their customs were identical with those of the Bella Coola proper. Accordingly, in this monograph, the term "Bella Coola" will be taken to include the inhabitants, not only of that valley, but of South Bentinck Arm and the head of Dean Channel. Those living on South Bentinck Arm will be referred to as *Tălio* people, the Bella Coola term for them; those of Dean Channel as Kimsquit, the name by which they are generally known. It is an anglicized form of the word *Kimpkuts*, meaning "Canyon," by which the Bella Bella designate the people of Dean River.

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VILLAGES ON SOUTH BENTINCK ARM

(28) *Tălio*: on the east side of South Bentinck Arm, about a quarter of a mile from the point that marks its junction with North Bentinck Arm. Food was obtained from an ocean fish-trap.[a] Long deserted except as a summer camp.

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(29) *Xaxĕlst*, "Island": east side of South Bentinck Arm, slightly north of the island opposite the Hot Springs on the west side of the fiord. The town took its name from this island. In summer the numerous inhabitants lived immediately opposite it, at a place where they had an ocean salmon-trap; in winter they moved to a fortified spot at the base of a mountain slightly farther to the north. This village was blotted out by a landslide one spring long ago, and the few survivors were unable to re-establish it.

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[731]

(30)[b] *Tsaxdziuw*: on the east side of the fiord about four miles above the last-named. A small town, whose inhabitants lived on the catch from their ocean fish-trap; it was recently deserted.

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[a] Ocean fish-traps work as follows:—A pen is made by a series of stakes, into which the salmon enter at high tide. It is then closed and, as the falling tide lays bare the sand, the imprisoned fish can be scooped out by hand or by hand-nets.

[b] Informants did not visit either South Bentinck Arm, or Kimsquit, but it will be convenient to continue the use of asterisks to mark those towns which are said to have been inhabited at that time.

[175]

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174 reliable traditions of Carrier settlements there. The probable explanation is that the Bella Coola formerly extended over the area, either in actual fact or according to mythology, but were supplanted by the Carriers.

175 The Dean River is called *Nulɔl*, and the generic name for the people of the Dean valley is *Sutslemx*. About eighty years [101] ago a smallpox epidemic so reduced the villages on the Kims- [164] quit that the survivors abandoned them and moved to the [731] Dean. At that time a certain Kimsquit man is believed to have said: "We will take their places and kill even their dogs."

Since that time, the joint settlement has suffered one [164] epidemic after another, until a mere handful of the people [731] survive, and they are almost entirely descended from the Kimsquit River immigrants. Within the last few years, these have requested permission from the Bella Coola to abandon Kimsquit entirely and live among them. The two groups have [628] always been on the best of terms, but the Bella Coola have not forgotten the fate of the Dean River people and have been unwilling to admit the Kimsquit survivors.

Villages on the Kimsquit River, Sä·tsk'

361 *(44) Sä·tsk':* this large and important town, at the mouth of the river, was deserted at the time of the smallpox epidemic.

(45) Nuxwlst: this settlement can be grouped with the last-mentioned, although situated on the shore of Dean Channel, at the site of the present Manitou Cannery, six miles away. No meaning of the name is known.

Tribal Organization

619 The subject of this monograph is the people of the above forty-five villages. They will be referred to as a *tribe*, and as this term is customarily limited to a political unit, a brief justification for its use is necessary.

342 Each Bella Coola village consisted of a single row of houses, 361 built along the shore of a river or the ocean. The front doors